



Law Enforcement Leaders to Discuss How Local Immigration Enforcement Challenges Public Safety Mission

Press Conference to Feature Findings, Implications of Groundbreaking New Police Foundation Report

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WASHINGTON, DC—The federal government’s failure to secure the borders and reform the immigration system has created tensions between communities throughout the country and pressure on state and local law enforcement to control unauthorized immigration, most notably through U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s 287(g) program of deputizing local and state police to perform immigration enforcement activities. In a report released today by the Police Foundation, local law enforcement executives, however, say immigration enforcement by local police undermines their core public safety mission, diverts scarce resources, increases their exposure to liability and litigation, and exacerbates fear in communities already distrustful of police. The report and its implications will be the topic of a press conference on Wednesday, May 20 at 2 p.m. EDT at 2226 Rayburn House Office Building. Participants include: Hubert Williams, President, Police Foundation; Chief Harold L. Hurtt, Houston, TX, Police Department; Chief Theron Bowman, Arlington, TX, Police Department; Chief Ronald Miller, Topeka, KS, Police Department; Chief Jose Lopez, Durham, NC, Police Department; and Chief Toussaint Summers, Herndon, VA, Police Department.

The report, *The Role of Local Police: Striking a Balance Between Immigration Enforcement and Civil Liberties*, examines the costs and benefits of immigration enforcement at the local level and includes the following recommendations:

- The costs of the 287(g) program outweigh the benefits
- If a local agency enters the 287(g) program, they should limit participation to serious criminal offenders and jail-based programs
- There are better alternatives to the 287(g) program for deporting criminal aliens
- Police officers should be prohibited from arresting and detaining persons to solely investigate immigration status in the absence of probable cause of an independent crime
- Implement policies and procedures for monitoring and enforcing racial profiling violations
- Involve community members in developing immigration policies
- Evaluation research should be conducted of the 287(g) program and other local immigration enforcement initiatives

- Employ community policing and problem-solving tactics to improve police-community relations with immigrant communities and resolve tension caused by expanding immigration
- The federal government must enact comprehensive border security and immigration reforms

The foundation report is the culmination of a national effort to bring together law enforcement leaders, public officials, scholars, and community stakeholders to collaboratively examine the implications of local law enforcement of immigration laws by reviewing practices, constitutional issues, and economic factors.

The report draws from a series of focus groups and a national conference and includes research on the rights of undocumented immigrants and the legal framework for the enforcement of immigration laws, demographic trends and characteristics, immigration and criminality, evaluation of federal efforts to collaborate with local police on immigration enforcement (287(g) program), and the experience of undocumented youth. Also included in the report are the results of two surveys of law enforcement executives on immigration and local policing.

According to Police Foundation president, Hubert Williams, “Police executives have felt torn between a desire to be helpful and cooperative with federal immigration authorities and a concern that their participation in immigration enforcement efforts will undo the gains they have achieved through community-oriented policing practices directed at gaining the trust and cooperation of immigrant communities. As one police chief pointed out during the project, ‘How do you police a community that will not talk to you?’”

The report is available from the Police Foundation and online at www.policefoundation.org/strikingabalance/.

The Police Foundation is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving policing. Established in 1970, the foundation has conducted seminal research in police behavior, policy, and procedure, and works to transfer to local agencies the best new information about practices for dealing effectively with the full range of police operational and administrative concerns. Motivating all of the foundation's efforts is the goal of efficient, humane policing that operates within the framework of democratic principles and the highest ideals of the nation.

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